

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

**Remarks at a Pennsylvania Democratic Party Reception in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania**
October 28, 2022

The President. Whoa! Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Please, take a seat if you have one. Thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you. Please, have a seat if you have one. Take a seat.

Assault on Paul F. Pelosi, Sr., in San Francisco, California

Folks, before I begin, I want us to take a short pause to send our love to Nancy and Paul Pelosi. I've been on the phone with Nancy; arranged for her to be able to get from Washington out to see her husband, Bobby, which—that's where—she's in a plane now heading out there.

And you've seen the news. He was attacked in their home. And when I spoke to the Speaker, she said that he's doing okay. He went to the hospital, was operated on. And he seems to be coming along well. He's in good spirits, and the whole family is there.

While this invasion [investigation]* is ongoing, the news reports indicate, it was intended to be an attack on Nancy—on the house Nancy Pelosi lives in, the third-ranking person in the United States in line to be President.

You know, it's reported that the same chant was used by this guy they have in custody that was used on January 6 in the attacks on the U.S. Capitol. I'm not making this up. This is reported. I can't guarantee it. I can tell you what's being reported. And the chant was: "Where's Nancy? Where's Nancy? Where's Nancy?"

This is despicable. There's no place in America. There's too much violence, political violence, too much hatred, too much vitriol.

And what makes us think that one party can talk about "stolen elections," COVID being a "hoax," "this is all a bunch of lies," and it not affect people who may not be so well balanced? What makes us think that it's not going to corrode the political climate?

Enough is enough is enough! Every person of good conscience needs to clearly and unambiguously stand up against the violence in our politics, regardless what your politics are. All of us! All of us together, as Americans.

Knowing Paul and Nancy and the family as I do, they're tough as they come. But we're praying for him. We're optimistic for his full recovery.

2022 Congressional and Gubernatorial Elections

Folks, now for the reason I'm here tonight: Hello, Pennsylvania. It's good to be back in Philly. As they say in Delaware, y'all elected me the first time, not by your votes, but by support coming into Delaware for me. Back in the old days, when Delaware didn't have a commercial television station, and they had to cover me in Philly, as much as they covered anybody else.
[Laughter]

Oh, God, I love Philly. I love Philly so much I married a Philly girl. And you probably can't see it——

* White House correction.

[At this point, the President raised his pant leg to reveal Philadelphia Phillies socks.]

——but I've got a——

Audience member. Let's go, Phillies! Let's go, Phillies! Let's go, Phillies!

The President. We've got a good year going, the Phillies and the Eagles.

Look, folks, I'd better get this on the way because the Phillies are playing tonight. *[Laughter]*
And I love you all, but I'd like to see the game too. *[Laughter]*

Lyriq, thanks for that introduction.

And thank you for the great Vice President Kamala Harris. She's making me look good.
[Laughter] And God love her. She's more like my buddy and my sister, but I trust her with my life. I trust her completely.

You know, folks—and, State Senator Sharif Street, thank you for hosting us tonight, pal.

It's good to be home. It's good to be with Democrats. It's good to be with family.

Tom Wolf—an honorable and decent man, Gov. A steady and strong manager to make government work. You really help the people of Pennsylvania. We're going to miss you, Tom, but you know I'm not letting you go. *[Laughter]* You're in my automatic dial. I'm going to need your help, man. You know, we'll always be friends, and we can count on one another.

And my brother from Scranton, Bobby Casey, as good as a person gets and a Senator who delivers for the people of his State and his country. Imagine Casey and Fetterman as partners in the U.S. Senate.

John's got a lot of experience serving the State as mayor and then as Lieutenant Governor. And he leaves nobody behind. John leaves nobody behind, whether it's building an economy that works for everyone, keeping communities safe, protecting your rights and freedoms. Above all, John has enormous integrity. You know who he is, you know where he stands; you also know John is Pennsylvania.

And, Josh, you're going to be one hell of a Governor, man. Talk about integrity. Josh is the real deal, unafraid to take on powerful interests, uncompromising in his values, but always willing to forge consensus.

As attorney general, he took on Big Pharma that was fueling the opioid crisis. In 2020, he took on the "big lie" and went to court dozens of times to stand up for the people of Pennsylvania and protect your right to vote and make sure it was counted—*[applause]*—protect the very integrity of our elections, protecting democracy itself.

And, folks, we need to elect Josh and John. We need to elect Democrats up and down this ballot.

You've got a great delegation in the Congress, including folks who are here tonight, like Dwight and Mary Gay Scanlon. Where are you? I keep telling Mary Kay *[Gay]** I'm from Scranton. It turns out there's a lot of Scanlons in the Biden family and the Finnegan family. I don't want to hurt her reputation, but we may be related for all we know. *[Laughter]*

Look, if we do that, we keep control of the Congress and the Governorship. We can flip the house. If we do those two things, we can flip the statehouse. Pennsylvania will be a better place, and so will America.

* White House correction.

Look, that's why we're all here. Eleven days. Eleven days until the most important by-election in our lifetimes. And that's not hyperbole. It's going to shape what this country looks like for the next decade or more. Not a joke.

Let's be clear: This election is not a referendum. It's a choice, a choice between two vastly different visions of America.

I've said from the beginning that my objective when I ran for President was to build an economy from the bottom up and the middle out; an economy that rewards work, not just wealth; an economy that works for everybody so the poor have a ladder up, the middle class can do well, and the wealthy will still do very fine.

It's a fundamental shift that's working, compared to the mega-MAGA Republican trickle-down economics that Republicans offer these days.

Audience members. Boo!

The President. No, seriously. Just look at the facts.

When I took office, this economy was in ruins. My predecessor was the first President since Herbert Hoover to lose jobs during his 4-year Presidency—the first President. Unemployment, when we came to office, was 6.4 percent. Hundreds of thousands of small businesses closed. Remember. Remember.

And the irony is that, during the pandemic, a record number of Americans became billionaires. No, not a joke. There's about seven—770-some or -50-some billionaires—a whole bunch came along during that pandemic—while 9 million Americans lost their job at the same time, out of work from the pandemic and Republican politics.

Today, we're in a much better place. We've got more to do. But 10 million jobs created since I took office—a record. More jobs created at this point than any Presidency in American history. Unemployment is not 6.5, but 3.5 percent, the lowest it's been in 50 years. And 5.4 million Americans applied to start new businesses last year, the highest level ever in American history.

Folks, Putin's invasion of Ukraine, which I predicted was going to happen and laid out when it was going to happen, it sent gas prices soaring around the world. And because of the elections we've taken—since the elections, we've been—we've taken gas prices down from where they were, here at home. They're down \$1.25 from their peak this summer, and they've been falling for the last 3 weeks in a row. That's adding up to real savings for American families.

The most common price for gasoline across America now is \$3.29 a gallon. Back in June, the most common price was over \$5 a gallon. We need to keep making progress by having energy companies bring down the cost of a gallon of gas to reflect what they pay for a barrel of oil.

I'm not making this stuff up. It's hard to make up. If they were paying—if they were taking the average profit they'd been making over the past 20 years instead of these historic profits they're making today, the most common price for gas would come down another 50 cents to under \$30—\$3 a gallon.

And by the way, last quarter, six—six—of the largest oil companies the last quarter—and their new quarter is coming out now—the last quarter, companies made \$70 billion in profit in one quarter, in 90 days. And Shell announced just yesterday that it made \$9.5 billion in the first quarter—the third quarter of this year—9.5. That's twice what they made in the quarter—third quarter of last year.

And, folks, if you think that's something, Exxon released its earnings today. You know how much they made in the third quarter? \$18.7 billion in 90 days. That's nearly triple what Exxon made last year, and the most it's made in its 152-year history, while the rest of America is

struggling. And these companies raised their dividends as well. They say that's how it's getting back to the taxpayers. I wonder how many people in South Philly have that Exxon stock with them.

Look, those excess profits are going back to their shareholders and their executives instead of going to lower prices at the pump and give relief to the American people who deserve it and need it. And I'm going to keep harping on it. They talk about me picking on them. They ain't seen nothing yet. I mean it. It outrages me.

And even though my Republican friends in Congress seem to be hoping for a recession, they were very disciplined—they were very disappointed yesterday. *[Laughter]* The GDP reports showed the economy is growing. It's growing. In fact, the economy grew 2.6 percent last quarter. And although it may not feel like it to everyone, but people's incomes went up last quarter more than inflation went up.

So economic growth is up, price inflation is down, real incomes are up, and gas prices are down. And by the way, exports are also up, which means we're making things here in America. Today, we're shipping American products overseas instead of shipping American jobs overseas.

And here's another thing. Remember last time around, with that other fella, we kept hearing about Infrastructure Week? *[Laughter]* We heard about Infrastructure Week for 4 years. *[Laughter]* And by the way, it never got done. In fact, it became a punchline. On my watch, with the help of Kamala and folks in this room, we turned it into Infrastructure Decade—a houdline *[headline]*.*

We passed the infrastructure bill. We created a once-in-a-generation investment in our Nation's roads, highways, bridges, railroads, ports, airports, water systems, high-speed internet. And by the way, have you been to the Philadelphia airport lately? Twenty-four million bucks to improve the main terminal, just a few miles from here. And I was just out in Pittsburgh, the City of Bridges—45 million bucks. The bridge that collapsed is about to be reopened because of the infrastructure bill.

And made in America. Made in America. The American people are beginning to see the benefits of the economy that works for them. Families have more net worth than they did before the pandemic. Fewer families are behind on their mortgages and credit card bills than before the pandemic. And more importantly, Americans have more health care than they ever had before the pandemic—ever.

But there's still people hurting. We're doing everything we can for folks to just have a little more breathing room, as my dad used to say. Just a little more breathing room.

I can't tell you how good it is—it makes me feel to finally beat Big Pharma and their million-dollar lobbyists. Folks, to give Medicare—Medicare—the power. I say to my former Congressman from Philadelphia, remember how hard we fought to take Medicare and—get Medicare the ability to negotiate lower drug prices? We finally did it, and we beat them, without a single Republican vote.

Look, this is a big deal. We've been trying to do it for years because, folks, we pay the highest prescription drug prices of anywhere in the world. That's not hyperbole. Anywhere in the world. The same prescription drug made by an American company, sold in Philadelphia and sold in Paris, the drug—that same drug sold in Paris is considerably cheaper. It's cheaper all around the world than it is here in the United States. Made by the same company.

* White House correction.

We're capping—this is—it really excites me. We're capping the out-of-pocket costs on a yearly basis for people on Medicare at \$2,000 maximum a year, even if—even if—their bill is 10-, 12-, 14,000 a year because they haven't made—they're paying for high-priced cancer drugs.

And one more thing: If Big Pharma continues to raise drug prices faster than inflation, they're going to have to write a check to Medicare to cover the difference. And by the way, last year—just to put this in perspective—last year, before we got this law passed, they raised prices on 1,200 prescription drugs. Hear me again: 1,200 prescription drugs they, in fact—that they manufacture—they raised prices on them, faster than inflation.

And by the way, it's one thing if you change the drug, you put millions of dollars more in research, and you make it better. Not a single change in these drugs. Nothing. No change. We're going to put a stop to that.

One more significant change we just made—[applause]—speaking of putting a stop to. I don't know how many of you, God forbid, know somebody who has type 1 diabetes, needs insulin. Well, guess what? We're going to cap the cost of insulin per month, for people on Medicare, to \$35 a month to deal with diabetes, instead of the average of \$400 a month that most pay now.

It cost \$10—\$10—to make that drug, and another 5—we'll give them credit for packaging it. [Laughter] Thirty-five dollars gives them a healthy profit. And by the way, the guy who, in fact, invented the drug, founded it, patented—he decided not to patent it—I talked to him—because he wanted everybody to have access to it. So it's not even patented. Anybody can make it.

They also passed—we also passed tax credits to help families buy energy-efficient appliances to lower their costs when everything from the refrigerator to the coffee maker breaks, to put solar panels on your home, to buy an electric vehicle, to weatherize your home. Things that will save, according to the experts, an average family \$500 a year.

I announced, this week, my administration is taking—going to get rid of unfair, hidden fees called junk fees. You don't know about them until they hit you. And they add up. You have an overdraft in your checking account? Thirty-five bucks they charge you on average. Credit card late fees, 50 bucks. These junk fees add up, and they're taking real money out of the pockets of average Americans.

That's on top of the actions we took earlier this month to lower the cost of hearing aids, make them available over the counter at Walgreens and Walmart, saving \$3,000 a pair. Three thousand dollars a pair for those with hearing loss.

And the Department of Transportation is working with the airlines to require that the travel sites disclose all the fees up front. How many of you decided to book a ticket to go see mom or dad at Thanksgiving if they live in a different city, and all of a sudden find out that it's going to cost you another 50 bucks for your baggage. Or if you want a child to sit next to you, it's going to cost you another 40 bucks. Or if you're going to—if you have to change your ticket, you've got to buy a whole new ticket. You don't get the—you don't get to do that.

Well, guess what? We're going to end that. I took action to ease the burden of—and, folks, I took the actions I promised I'd do to ease the burden of student debt for millions of working class and middle class people. Over 90 percent of that debt are people who earn less than 75 grand a year.

Republicans—Governors, Senators, Congressmen—criticized the move. But I'm never going to apologize for helping working and middle class Americans as they recover from a pandemic, especially not to the same Republicans officials who voted for an unpaid—for a \$2 trillion tax cut, mainly benefiting the superwealthy and big corporations.

And I don't want to hear it from MAGA Republicans who sit in the Congress today—their names were published in the press—who got loans for \$100,000 or more, up to even a million-one, for pandemic relief; the PPP loans forgiven. And those loans are now forgiven. And they're attacking middle class Americans for a \$10,000 break on their—on the cost of their tuition? Give me a break, man. Who the hell do they think they are? I really mean it. Think about it.

And by the way, we're doing all this—you know how the Republicans talk about the "big-spendin' Democrats"? Well, guess what? We're the ones reducing the deficit. You know, the very deficit reduction that all Republicans voted against when they opposed the inflation act—Inflation Reduction Act.

This year alone—just this calendar year, okay?—this is official: The Democrats and that guy, Biden—[laughter]—and that Vice President came along and reduced the Federal debt by \$1.4 trillion. We cut it in half, the largest debt reduction in American history. We cut the deficit in half. And that's on top of last year with a—a historic drop in the deficit last year was \$350 billion.

Folks, we're going to further reduce the deficit over the next decade as well, another \$250 billion. And a big part of that is because corporations are finally going to pay a staggering minimum tax of 15 percent. That's less than a nurse makes—pays or a firefighter.

Folks, and one more thing: On our watch, for the first time in 10 years, seniors are going to get the biggest increase in their Social Security checks they've gotten. Their checks are going to go up while their Medicare premiums go down.

I promise you, we'll protect Social Security, we'll protect Medicare, we'll protect you. And all of this is in stark contrast to the stated Republican agenda. You know, when you ask—ask anybody out there who thinks they know politics: What's the Republican agenda? What are they for?

Audience member. Nothing!

Audience member. Guns!

Audience members. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, you've got it about right. Here's the deal. Kevin McCarthy, the Republican leader in House of Representatives, and his fellow MAGA Republicans say their number-one priority—number-one priority—is to do the following: First, deny Medicare the right to negotiate drug prices and give the power back to Big Pharma—not a joke—so they can continue to rip us off on prescription drug prices. Two, get rid of the cap of \$2,000 on prescription drugs for seniors on Medicare. Gone. The \$35-a-month cap on insulin for seniors—gone. Savings on health premiums of \$800 a year for the millions of Americans under the Affordable Care Act—gone.

And of course, they're going try for their 499th time, or whatever the number is—they're still determined to eliminate the Affordable Care Act. And by the way, if they do, that means—not a joke, everybody; that's why we defeated it in 2018 when they tried to do it. We went to 54 States. The reason is, people didn't realize that the only reason anybody who has a preexisting condition can get health care is because of that Affordable Care Act. Tens of millions.

Folks, these protections will be gone as well if Republicans get their way: tax credits for lower energy bills—gone; corporate minimum tax of 15 percent I signed into law—gone.

Under the Republican plan, many of the biggest corporations are going to go back to paying zero, like they did in 2015—I mean 2020. Fifty-five of major Fortune 500 companies made \$40 billion in 2020, and they paid zero—not a single cent—in Federal taxes.

That's their plan, among other things. It's reckless. It's irresponsible. It will make inflation much worse and badly hurt working and middle class Americans.

But that's not all. And this is the part that's hard to believe, but check it out. Go online and just read it: They're coming after Social Security and Medicare.

Rick Scott, the conservative Senator from Florida who is in charge of electing Republicans to the Senate this year, clearly laid out his plan—their plan. They put Social Security and Medicare on the chopping block every 5 years. That means every 5 years, Congress is going to have to vote de novo to cut, reduce, or completely eliminate Social Security, or keep it exactly how it is.

And then along came Ron Johnson from Wisconsin, a great American. *[Laughter]* He wanted to do Scott one better. He thinks waiting every 5 years is too long. Not a joke. This is real. He thinks Social Security and Medicare should be on the chopping block every single year; nothing permanent about the programs, they're just yearly programs. If Congress doesn't vote to keep it, it goes away. It's not just Social Security and Medicare; he also wants to put—veterans benefits every year have to be revoted for.

This—see, these are programs that were for long term. He wants to put everything in the Federal budget in that position.

And now they're saying if I won't cooperate between the election and the end of the fiscal year—I mean, the end of the year, when Congress goes out—to cut Social Security and Medicare, they're going to shut down the Government and let America default on its debt. Talk about irresponsibility. No, this—not—this—check it out.

Even if they don't go as far as being able to do that—because I'm not going to yield—just threatening default has severe consequences. Remember when Mitch McConnell did that and we got downgraded our—and it held—hurt our economy? There's nothing—nothing—that will create more chaos or do more damage to the American economy than this.

But look, their extremism isn't limited to social programs and the economy. They're coming after your right to vote and who can count your vote. You all know that here in Pennsylvania, and you know it well. And that's why Josh was such a great attorney general and why your new attorney general is going to make—*[applause]*.

But let there be no mistake about this: Folks, democracy is—not figuratively—literally on the ballot this year. It's on the ballot, along with your right to choose and your right to privacy. And the amazing thing is, they're saying it out loud. They're saying it out loud, as the Vice President said.

Republicans in Congress have already introduced legislation to ban—a national ban on the right to choose. Josh's opponent believes there should be no exceptions, even for rape or incest. None.

Audience member. Boo!

The President. And this is over the top, guys.

And as we've all heard and saw on Tuesday night, Dr. Oz—as my mother would say, God bless him—*[laughter]*—thinks the right to choose should be between, as the Vice President pointed out, a man—excuse me—a woman, her doctor, and, quote, "local political leaders."

Audience members. Boo!

[The President made the sign of the cross.]

[*Laughter*] No, but I mean—I mean, they—I mean, it—ugh. [*Laughter*] You heard it right: "local political leaders."

Look, the bottom line is this: If Republicans gain control of—in Congress and pass the national-wide ban on abortion, I will veto it. But if we elect to the Senate two more Democrats and keep control of the House, we're going to codify *Roe v. Wade* in January so it's the law of the land—[*applause*]—and take us back to what the law used to be before *Dobbs*. Fifty years' worth of security.

Look, let me close with this. It's been a rough few years for a lot of hard-working Americans. For a lot of families, things are still tough. But there are bright spots where America is reasserting itself. We've made enormous progress in the last 20 months. We have more to do.

And I promise you, I'm going to ban assault weapons again. I did it once; I'll do it again.

But everything's at stake in just 11 days. And it's not hyperbole to suggest all eyes are on Pennsylvania. So much is at stake for this State, for this country we all love. So I call on Democrats and mainstream Republicans and Independents to come together. We can meet this moment; we can meet it together.

I truly believe we're just getting started. I've never been more optimistic about America's future. I'm not mean—I mean it sincerely. We just have to remember who in God's name we are. We're the United States of America! And there's nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity if we work together.

So vote, vote, vote! Get out the vote! Win! Vote! Vote! Vote! Vote!

May God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. And go, Phillies!

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:54 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Paul F. Pelosi, Sr., husband of Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, who was assaulted by an intruder in their San Francisco, CA, residence on October 28; David DePape, the alleged assailant in the attack on Mr. Pelosi; Lyriq Eccleston, cardiovascular monitoring technician and member of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals; Pennsylvania Democratic senatorial candidate Lt. Gov. John K. Fetterman and Republican senatorial candidate Mehmet Oz; Pennsylvania Democratic gubernatorial candidate State Attorney General Joshua D. Shapiro and Republican gubernatorial candidate State Sen. Douglas V. Mastriano; Rep. Dwight E. Evans; former President Donald J. Trump; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; former Rep. Robert A. Brady; and Sen. Ronald H. Johnson.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Pennsylvania Democratic Party reception in Philadelphia, PA.

Locations: Philadelphia, PA.

Names: Brady, Robert A.; Casey, Robert P., Jr.; DePape, David; Eccleston, Lyriq; Evans, Dwight E.; Fetterman, John K.; Harris, Kamala D.; Johnson, Ronald H.; Mastriano, Douglas V.; McCarthy, Kevin O.; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Oz, Mehmet; Pelosi, Nancy; Pelosi, Paul F., Sr.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Scanlon, Mary Gay; Scott, Richard L.; Shapiro, Joshua D.; Street, Sharif; Trump, Donald J.; Wolf, Thomas W.

Subjects: Budget, Federal : Deficit and national debt; Business and industry : Corporate responsibility; Business and industry : Junk fees imposed on consumers, prevention efforts; Business and industry : Small businesses, promotion efforts; California : Attack on Paul F. Pelosi, Sr., husband of Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi in their San Francisco

residence; Civil rights : Voting rights; Congress : House of Representatives :: Minority leader; Congress : House of Representatives :: Speaker; Congress : Senate :: Minority leader; District of Columbia : 2021 civil unrest and violence; Economy, national : Household income and wages; Economy, national : Improvement; Economy, national : Inflation; Education : Postsecondary education :: Federal student loans, partial forgiveness; Elections : 2022 congressional elections; Energy : Electric and hybrid vehicles, promotion efforts; Energy : Energy efficiency and weatherization, homes and buildings; Energy : Gasoline, oil, and natural gas costs; Health and medical care : Abortion; Health and medical care : Health insurance exchanges; Health and medical care : Medical equipment and supplies; Health and medical care : Medicare and Medicaid; Health and medical care : Prescription drugs, affordability and costs; Health and medical care : Seniors, prescription drug benefits; Infrastructure, national improvement efforts; Judiciary : Supreme Court :: U.S. Supreme Court opinion overturning 1973 decision in Roe v. Wade; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; Pennsylvania : Democratic Party events; Pennsylvania : Governor; Pennsylvania : Lieutenant Governor; Pennsylvania : Pittsburgh :: Bridge collapse; Pennsylvania : President's visits; Republican Party : National Republican Senatorial Committee; Russia : President; Russia : Ukraine, airstrikes and invasion; Social Security and retirement : Social Security program; Taxation : Corporate tax rates; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Ukraine : Russian airstrikes and invasion; White House Office : Vice President.

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